

The Virtual Arts and Life Magazine

reZ

November/December 2019

When Reality Immerses

Roman Summer

Poetry

Sneak Preview

Canticle for Meg

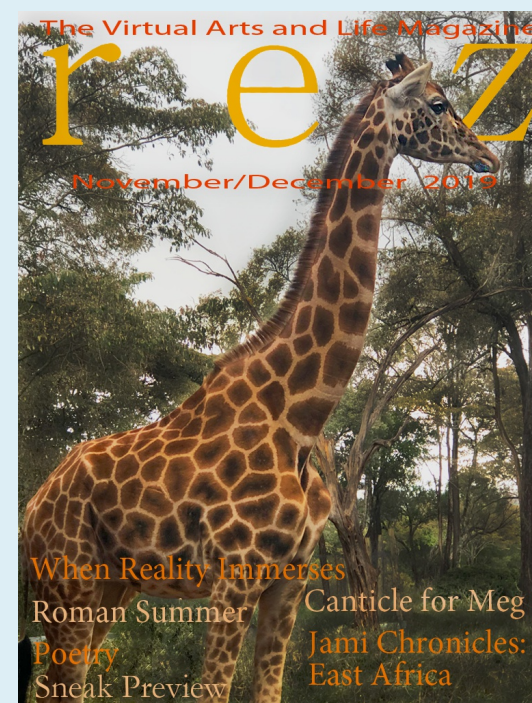
Jami Chronicles:
East Africa

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- **The Sneak Preview** Q Symphony looks ahead to the Afterlife Developer's Conference - way ahead. It's in 2037. Get tickets now.
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- **A Canticle for Meg** Cybele Moon joins our pages in such a stunning fashion with a family story that turns tragic. Brilliant.
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About the Cover: Jami Mills captures her favorite animal in the kingdom, the exotic and impossible giraffe, during her travels in East Africa, the cover story for this month's holiday issue. Page through the rest of her Chronicles and see the other wild animals that caught her fancy.



“If you have men who
will only come if they
know there is a good road,
I don’t want them. I want
men who will come
if there is no road at all.”

Dr. David Livingstone



AFTER

L O U



AFTER DARK

LOUNGE



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THE HOUSE OF



Sakura

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WITH SL'S PREMIER COUNTRY
ROMANCE, ELEGANCE, AND

CONTACT LYNN MIMISTRO



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AND INTIMACY.

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TERPSICORPS ARTWERKS





The Jami Chronicles

East Africa

Text and Photography by Jami

S:

Mills



Recalling the other-worldliness of New Delhi the first time I stepped foot onto Indian soil, with the smells of street vendors, the thick, heavy air, the loud, chaotic crowds, the Brahmin cattle being escorted down gridlocked streets filled with tuk tuks, I expected much the same foreignness as I exited the airport in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi. When I walked outside, however, the air was crisp and I was confronted with the well-manicured landscaping of a world-class international airport and a bustling modern metropolis of 4.5 million people. I might as well have landed in Boston. I was nevertheless thrilled about the adventures ahead, as I spotted my first African wild animal: a brown sparrow sitting on a nearby tree. Hey! You gotta start somewhere.

With a day to kill in Nairobi before heading out on safari, I went to two animal sanctuaries well known to Kenya travelers: the elephant orphanage operated by the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, where hand-raised baby elephants are pampered until age three when they are successfully released back into the wild; and the Giraffe Center, a sanctuary 12 miles outside of the city where severely endangered Rothschild giraffes are protected and nurtured (and where they'll eat food pellets right from your hand with their slimy, foot-long tongues).

The next day it's a quick flight to Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, where the first half of my safari starts (we'll finish back in Kenya). There aren't very many things that I'll wake up for at 5:00 a.m., but my first excursion into the Tanzanian bush is certainly one of them. The first of four camps on my safari is on the bluff overlooking the Ngorongoro Crater Park, and so begins the safari portion of my trip. You'd better get to the park entrance early as stragglers find themselves at the end of a long line of safari vehicles when the park opens. As with so many things, the early bird gets the worm (or in this case, preferred entrance into a place so enchanting, it nearly defies belief).



First, let me describe the safari vehicle. It looks as if it were designed to withstand an IED and resembles more of a Desert Storm Humvee than the Range Rover we always imagine. Whether its tank-like qualities are intended to repel a charging rhino or not, I can't say, but you have the feeling it could, which is comforting. Its flat roof can be raised three or four feet, accordion-style, so that those inside can stand with their binoculars, iPhones or Nikons in hand and get a bird's eye view. Each vehicle is outfitted with a short wave radio, enabling drivers to communicate with one another and announce nearby animal sightings.



The park lies within a circular crater, 100 square miles in area, created by a now-extinct volcano. It is so vast that it probably has a dozen distinct eco systems - - forests, springs, palm tree groves, arid plains, lakes, parched plains, oases, lakes, and scrub brush. The natural diversity of this self-contained (and protected) environment is truly breathtaking.

No sooner do we begin our steep descent into the crater than our Tanzanian guide pulls to the side of the road (this is what all the vehicles do when coming upon things of interest) and points up at the crest of the crater, where two male lions are sauntering along. It matters little to me that they are mere specks in the distance and my binoculars are required to make them out. I've already spotted one the "Big Five," which consist of rhinos, cape buffalos, elephants, leopards and lions (referring to the five most difficult animals in Africa to hunt on foot, but are now considered must-see, bucket list animals). Personally, I'd substitute the giraffe for the cape buffalo, but that's a subjective view.

I spot a little fawn of some type, tan with a horizontal black stripe along its sides, and two straight horns. "What's that," I ask for the first of maybe a hundred times. My guide patiently says, "That's a gazelle - - you'll see many more of those later today." This



was a complete understatement because the park is teeming with them, numbering in the thousands, I'm sure. Then an adult African elephant and her baby appear out of some branches. And now it's on!

We turn into the open plains and I gasp at hundreds of wildebeests roaming, mixed with an occasional zebra. "Look! A zebra," which no doubt elicited another eye roll from the guide (we'll later see thousands of them). Suddenly, there's crackling static on the radio followed by an exchange in Swahili. Our guide turns and excitedly shouts, "The lions are walking," and punches the accelerator. "Hold on tight," and with that we tear out along the rutted dirt road, raising a cloud of dust in our wake. We can see in the



distance three or four other vehicles pulled over to the side a few hundred yards ahead, and a herd of startled gazelles and wildebeests making tracks. In no particularly hurry at all, a magnificent male lion with full mane ambles along without a care in the world, followed shortly thereafter by another male lion, as the other animals keep what they consider to be a safe distance from them of maybe 100 yards. They pass within 10 feet of our vehicle without so much as acknowledging our presence and disappear. What a thrill!

We spy another gathering of vehicles a quarter mile off and make our way in that direction. Fifty buzzards and vultures have swarmed around the fresh carcass of a wildebeest, although our guide doubts it was freshly killed by the cats we had just encountered. "Probably last night, I imagine," says our guide. A pack of six hyenas circle 50 yards from the kill, frightened not by the birds but by the vehicles idling in the vicinity. Hyenas, by the way, are incredibly strong and are prodigious

killers in their own right, with jaws so strong that they crush and actually eat the bones they pick over. The big cats pay due respect to the hyenas, and sometimes will yield a kill to them to keep the peace.

We keep moving until we reach one of the most remarkable sights I've ever witnessed - - a life-long memory without question: a large watering hole (called the Hippo Pond) and a slight rise which provides a dream-like tableau: dozens of water buffalo grazing next to gazelles, with beautiful egrets and ibises intermingled. A herd of several hundred zebras and wildebeests are spread against the sky. Three adult hippos are submerged next to an array of smooth stones. Wait! Those aren't stones at all as I look closer. They too are submerged hippos, no fewer than 75 by my count. With a dropped jaw, I snap photos, get close-up views with my binoculars, and I'm transported into a wildlife fever dream. We stayed for close to an hour, being unable to tear ourselves away from this remarkable sight.







We find a lovely picnic spot for lunch, after which our guide suggests another ecosystem we haven't yet explored. We take off in an easterly direction when I notice our guides eyes fixed on something. "The antelopes are all looking in the same direction. Let's head over there." If you want to find something exciting, look into the eyes of your driver, who will be looking into the eyes of the antelope, who will be looking at something that concerns them greatly. Another vehicle coming from the opposite direction pulls even with our driver and they exchange more Swahili. "Two lions over in the grove," and we tear off again. Under a huge shade tree are two napping male lions, maybe 20 yards off. One

awakens and smiles for my camera.

We make our way toward another grove where a ranger shouts "Rhino!" and points into the bush. I look just in time to get a glimpse of a shiny black rhino quickly making its way into denser brush. Our guide looks concerned and beckons us to stay near the vehicle in case it decides to charge. I don't argue. We've stayed an hour later than our schedule called for, so we contentedly made our way up and out of the crater back to our lodge, with a trip full of sights and memories, and this just our first day of safari.

The single most surprising (and to this day incomprehensible) aspect of the





safari is how close you can get to wild, dangerous animals in an open vehicle with an unarmed guide. The only way I can describe it is that the animals are completely relaxed around the safari vehicles and are oblivious to them and their passengers, even though the animals surely must be able to pick up our scent. Perhaps it's because they know that no vehicles have ever threatened them. Our guides remind me that if I were to step outside the vehicle, the dynamic would dramatically change and the animals would instantly become very stressed and agitated in the presence of this "super predator" human. Imprinted in their brains are experiences with

poachers and Masai hunters who pose existential threats. Interestingly, our guide tells me that almost all of the animals in the wild will exhibit some sort of warning behavior before attacking, either vocally or with mock lunges. That's the time to drive on. Apparently, only the cape buffalo has been known to attack a human without any warning whatsoever. They are enormous, brutish animals that you really don't want to get too close to anyway.

So popular are the cats among the Big Five that I'm going to devote a special section just for them. Lions, leopards and cheetahs comprise this fierce and



photo by Gudson



predatory group, with (spoiler alert) lions being the most feared, even among the other cats. The sleek Black Panther, another favorite cat of mine, isn't found in East Africa, but lives primarily in Asia. Many don't realize that these African cats will attack and devour each other, with cheetahs being the underdogs despite their incredible speed. In this hierarchy, the bulkier muscles dominate.

The cheetahs, with their disproportionately long, slender legs, while exotic and gorgeous, are the most at risk, even from hyenas and jackals, but boy can they run! Cheetahs often rely on the element of surprise to catch their prey (favorite among them is the gazelle) because if you're relying

on brute speed (being the fastest land animal, cheetahs can run 75 miles/hr. [or 120 km/hr.]), it's not uncommon for a cheetah to overrun its intended target by a good margin, allowing it to escape its fate.

Leopards, who may prey upon an occasional cheetah, are still very fearful of lions, and if there isn't a nearby tree for it to climb (lions can't climb), its life is at extreme risk, especially if it's upwind of a hungry lion. We had tracked a momma cheetah and her three cubs (see insert) for a couple of days, but on one clear afternoon, they found themselves in a dangerous bind - - hyenas on one side and lions on the other. While guides are cautioned not to interfere with the



natural scheme, that day our guide was so fearful for the cheetahs' well-being that he clapped his hands loudly to distract and confuse the hyenas, which were already licking their proverbial chops while they glanced furtively at the nervous cheetahs. The way I justify this human intervention is that we are every bit as much a part of the animal hierarchy as any other beast, so it's only fitting that we should occasionally impose our will. Hearts were pounding all around as the momma and her three cubs threaded the needle and made their way to safety.

Another thrilling episode featured three hungry looking lionesses lying in the grass relaxing. Our guide pointed out that they were in a hunting formation, evenly spaced about 100 yards from one another, triangulating their attention on a herd of wildebeests and zebras that was not far away (and upwind, so they were unaware of the peril they were in). "I wouldn't be surprised if the lionesses get up and approach the herd, corralling them into a killing zone," our guide speculated. Sure enough, all three stood and began to slowly close on the herd, still with the benefit of stealth. "If they start picking up the pace, there'll be a kill here for sure," our guide whispered, and with that, the lionesses began to trot. The guide gunned the engine at the same time the lionesses began to sprint. A cloud of dust around the herd

gave evidence that the lionesses had been found out, as the wildebeests and zebras made a desperate dash for the nearby river. Alas, and unexpectedly, the hunted all made their way to safety across the river seconds before the arriving lionesses, leaving one frustrated cat staring at a giraffe which was casually following the action. An adult giraffe can kill a lion with the kick of its powerful legs, so a lion will seldom be so bold as to attack a healthy adult. The lioness, out of frustration, nonetheless lunged at the giraffe momentarily but, thinking better of it, backed away and retreated. I must say, I was relieved that there was no kill that day and we wouldn't see an actual kill for the rest of the safari, although we did happen upon three recent kills that were being devoured, either by the cats that had brought the animals down (a gazelle and a zebra) or by the opportunistic vultures and other scavenging birds.

As exciting as the cats are to watch, equally compelling are the baby animals that provide endless comic relief, from the baby giraffes that are so tiny, they can walk under their mommas without touching their heads, to the baby elephants (this one only 10 days old), which for laughs would back up and bump the mommas legs, then fall down and gleefully kick its own legs up in the air (the pictured baby would also suck on its own trunk, not



yet old enough to forage with it), to the plump baby hippos waddling along at a quick pace. Baby gazelles, dik diks (small antelopes), and goats prance around, capturing hearts as they do. And speaking of comic relief, there's always the wart hogs (think Pumbaa from *The Lion King*), which are the most ridiculous animals in the world, especially when they race across the ground with their tiny little legs (they're very fast).

Poaching is still a serious problem, but reserves are devoting ever-increasing resources to combat the problem, mostly in the form of armed rangers who are encouraged to kill on sight any poachers. Sadly, this in turn has resulted in the murders of several park rangers at the hands of the poachers.

We are told, however, that while progress is being made, more needs to be done. (Chinese men need to stop using rhinoceros horn as a perceived aphrodisiac for starters.)

Time doesn't allow for more stories, although after two weeks and probably 15 game drives, I

definitely have them (from dancing in a Masai village, to a remarkable moonrise (with full moon, no less), to culture lessons about arranged marriages with men, not women, providing the dowry (usually a mix of goats and cows)). I hope, however, that you've gleaned enough from my account to stimulate your interest in seeing the wilds of Africa and perhaps you'll move it up your to-do list. Stay tuned for the next installment of *The Jami Chronicles*, which will feature a new, yet-to-be determined destination, but surely a fascinating one. Asante sana.

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photography
jami mills



roman summer



photo by Dimsy

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It was as if a spotlight suddenly shone on Bella. She brightened, straightened up in her chair and I knew Santino was approaching. I put my cigarette out in the ashtray on the table and brushed damp hair away from my forehead. This was the first time I was meeting him outside the environs of his workplace, the hotel bar. I was cool. I would be cool.

“Bella,” he said, in a fine deep voice, just like a man. He seemed a man to me, though he was not any taller than Bella, rather thin, and was so close-shaven that he looked like he was too young to have started a beard. He wore his dark, not entirely clean hair in a pony tail tied at the base of his neck. He leaned over and brushed her cheeks with his lips, European style, then turned to me.

I stood up and he took my shoulders, and we exchanged air kisses on each cheek. He smelled strongly of cologne, something very citrus, very forest, and made a tiny grunting sound when he kissed. I wondered if I had tobacco breath.

He sat in the wrought iron chair next to Bella, and I saw her seek out his hand. That was bold of her I, thought. I think she did it for my benefit, to prove she was brave and their relationship was powerful. He grinned at me. He had perfect, perfectly white teeth.

I had only seen him in the muted light of the mirrored bar, when Mama and Bella and I had our pre- or after-dinner glass

of wine. I saw that Santino had downy hair on his arms that caught the light. He wore a short-sleeved white shirt, like the one he wore while bartending, minus the black vest, and a pair of rather tight jeans.

Bella had burgundy-coloured fingernails; we both did, having painted them that morning. We tended, naturally, to embrace the fact that we looked alike. We harboured the idea that we could substitute each other out, at any time (this was called The Game), and no one would necessarily be the wiser. I had a sudden longing to swap with Bella right now, to be the one sitting close to a man, holding hands in a cafe in Rome, his thumb rubbing my palm, his knee nudging mine. I longed for this even though I found him rather repulsive and fearsome... all the hair, the pores, what lay between his legs, so foreign.

I wanted to be the one to stand up with him, blow a kiss to my sister still in her wrought iron chair, with her coffee on the yellow tablecloth, and steal away with Santino to his parents' house, where he lived, and where he brought Bella after his parents returned to their jobs after the long break for lunch. I would be there instead of Bella, lying on the couch with him watching Italian television, lazily wrapped around each other. I would hear him whisper in my ear about how beautiful I was, how much he wanted me, how I made him crazy. I would feel all the flushes, all the tingles, my flesh would move by itself when he touched it. I would feel his fingers on my scalp, as he buried his face in my hair, whispering now,

and his had running down my shoulder, down my arm, and around my waist.

He often whispered in Italian, and Bella had no idea what he said. “He could be saying, oh, you are such a boiled egg,” Bella said. “I’ll secretly learn Italian and see what he is really saying.”

“How could you love someone that calls you an egg?”

“He has other good qualities,” Bella told me.

We were about to turn sixteen, and I had only been kissed in the basement of Jimmy Russell’s basement, when I was eleven, and there was no love. Jimmy was fifteen and I suspect he wanted to practice his kissing skills for more worthy prey.

I didn’t know what it felt like to get down and dirty. I wanted to know. I hatched a tiny little plan.

First, I ran it by Bella, sort of.

“Wouldn’t it be funny,” I said to her that night as we dipped Kleenex into nail polish remover and made the burgundy polish disappear. “If we played The Game with Santino?”

Bella burst out laughing and, unfortunately, she didn’t take me seriously.

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VINTAGE INSPIRED
BITTSTIQUE





The Sneak Preview



W by Q Symphony

I got a backstage ticket for the sneak preview of the Afterlife Developers Conference to see what the Developers are working on to prepare the first edition of the conference in 2037.

I download the app THE FAKED VR from Google Playstore.

After the usual Terms of Service that I must accept, and the checking of my ticket, I find myself in the middle of a world.

of Kitsune is made out of tears?”

I shake my head. The voice is The Oracle, another name for The Thunder of God, the recoded voice of Don LaFontaine.

”I did not know this,” I say. “I thought Kitsune is the god-like entity coming to Earth in snowflakes.” The Oracle, a visualization of the LaFontaine machine, blinks and seems to be calculating as if it is doing some hard number crunches. I look around and



Do not use this application while on Substance-D, Vurt, LOT 6, NZT-48, Soma or Nexus; while driving, skydiving or in a wormhole. Best to take a seat on a swivel chair with seat belts on before starting The Faked VR. Read carefully the safety instructions of the products you use before entering the VR space. Katatonenkunst is waiting to blow your mind.



TERMS OF SERVICE



I HAVE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS AND DECLARE TO BE OF A SANE AND SOUND MIND AND THAT I HAVE A HEALTH CONDITION LIKE ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER IN TERMINATOR. GOOGLE CARDBOARD INSTRUCTIONS APPLY.

START THE CARDBOARD VR-EXPERIENCE

I hear a voice. I turn my body on the swivel chair I am sitting on towards the source where I suspect the voice is coming from.

I hear, ”Do you know that The Temple

see five origami panels rezzing out of boxes. They start to unfold, then fold, then unfold again, each time creating a different structure. Legs, arms, fingers, rotators. Now the paper dance begins. I remember that in SYZYGy we are told

that there are many ways to travel.

“It is the moment when OA explains to us the world by Old Night that understanding goes by a language of a different kind, by a visual language,” the Oracle says.

ended when Old Night forced OA to tell us that she is an inter-dimensional traveler.”

Hearing these words I give them time. I ask myself, “Why did I get the ticket for the Afterlife Developers



“I have seen Old Night dying,” I say. I don’t need to tell the Oracle that it was a manifestation of Azrael performing his death on stage in a theatre, that he was a creature of the water. I get proof instantly from the Oracle that I am right, that there is no need for saying this.

“The time of the biological world

Conference, and why do I get now a glimpse of what the coders are working for 2037?”

I nod and say to honour the ticket and the words the OA said, “You have my permission to kill me.” Then I will have 37 seconds to uncover the mystery of this world, the world where I am sitting on a swivel chair. In other

words, to find Home, to find where Kitsune lives, supposedly in a world of snowflakes Japanese legends say.

The Oracle states, "The temperature on Earth has risen too fast. There is no longer snow for the Kitsune. There is rain." My vision changes, the Tears in Rain dialogue naturally makes me cry, makes everyone cry since Rutger Hauer said what he felt when playing the role of the replicant in Blade Runner.

I see a Blue Alien in a T-pose. Is this symbolizing that the script engine is still loading his code? He stands in front of a curved surface. Is it a stone with advanced light reflection? I need to move closer. The Blue Alien holds an umbrella. Rain is falling. The rain comes from the umbrella. "The Raining Umbrella," I whisper. Katatonenkunst based on *The Mechanics of Tears*. I memorize words by William Gibson, "... unframed sheets of what looked like rain-stained cardboard, stabbed through...."

"Conservative," I mumble. Yes, conservative. Gibson said this in the year 1986 but he meant his words for the future.

"Do I have to press a knob?" I ask the Oracle. I see a Teleport button. Have buttons become the point of focus for the mind to navigate? No need to click

any longer?

The Oracle answers, "Every object made in Swordcoder can be a representation of what Gibson describes in Count Zero as the knob."

My thoughts on this is all that is needed. I immerse in the motto of the programming language, 'Code is your weapon. Sword is your defence.' I hold the sword in hand, the one I saw in ERA – Ameno. When I watched the video it made me cry, when I read in an article in *rez Magazine* about the future of coding by thoughts. It was in April 2017.

No knob any longer. Nor a physical contact needed. I find myself outside the world, my ticket no longer valid. All transparent. I look back. Are the Developers still coding? I have been in Q Symphony. Was I in the old real life? Am I now in the next level, in VR Symphony, the Afterlife? A hell of a sneak preview I must admit, because we write the year 2020.

I sit in Cagliari on a swivel chair in The Basement of EX MA, a former slaughter house, now the premier art location of Sardinia, which is in Italy, just to make it clear that Afterlife is real and I drink my beer. That's a lie, because I drink no beer, but this would be another story.

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THE FAKED

The VR embassy in
THE WRONG Biennale

the ↗
wrong

In a world where all is FAKED we have
to accept that REALITY is not different.
The hope mankind keeps alive is that
VIRTUAL will become REAL.

THE FAKED
VR



The Hen

by rak

Of my form do you thoughtfully savour.
Of my form do you wonder the flavour,
The green of my eye, the curve of my thigh.
The length of my hair, the feel of it there,
.....My breasts laying bare...

Under your gaze like the sun do I blaze.
Languid but bound, and making no sound
As touches so light, the rope passing round.
With touches so light, my weakness is found.....

With the hook and the loop, their use you have learned.
With the hook and the loop, my body was yearned
The hook and the loop is over my head
The hook and the loop I MIGHT surely dread...

mp Ballet

showes

My heart beating fast so full of alarm,
Your eyes intense but still full of calm
Arms now tied my tight closed lashes,
Sensations strong still coming in flashes

A leg hoisted high, maybe I'll die.
Breathing restricted should I just cry?
Panic rising, staccato gasps,
Primal struggles, she cannot last

Tears falling now, she lost control,
She shudders she shivers, against the hard pole
Her conservative life, her sweet tended soul
Now helpless and bound, he's taken control.

With the hook and the loop, their use you have learned.
With the hook and the loop, my body was yearned
The hook and the loop is over my head
The hook and the loop I WILL surely dread

His hands pause their work, those hands full of skill.
These hands are so strong, these hands they could kill!
And those hands lift my head his eyes pierce my mind,
My eyes are so wet but his dark and kind.

Kind words through a panicked curtain
Pierced by kisses of that I'm certain.
Steady hands on shivering curves,
An artful form he still preserves

My robe pulled away no choice to display
His stifled gasp in a hemp ballet

The twists and spins and a pirouette
The ropes they dance a young marionette

With the hook and the loop, their use you have learned.
With the hook and the loop, my body was yearned
The hook and the loop is over my head
Through the hook and the loop the rope is thread

The ropes take the strain, body resigned falls into their clasp
Rope biting soft flesh drive the fears from her grasp
A mind once disturbed a body perturbed melts into one
Her feet leave the floor and in peace knows that he's won

With the hook and the loop, their use you have learned.
With the hook and the loop, my body you earned
The hook and the loop is over my head
Through the hook and the loop my fears are now shed.....





A Canticle for Meg

Dedicated to and in memory of two women
Names and places are changed but thank
cousin Sharon, for sharing old family albums

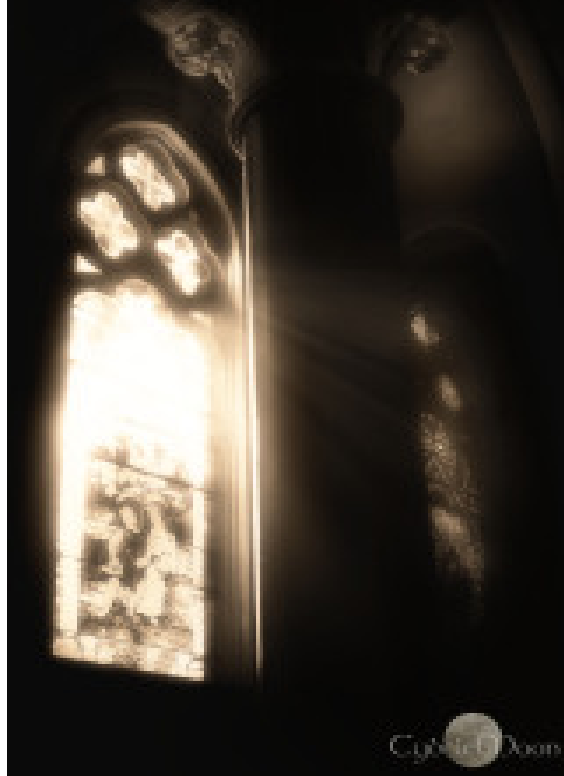


g Cybele Moon

men of the 20th Century, rest in peace.
ks to my mom, grandparents and my
ums and stories.

Kate stood quietly with bowed head and lit the tiny votive prayer candle under the icon of the Sacred Heart. The church was filled with a silence so profound she could hear her thoughts and memories swirling around like a softly wailing wind inside her head. It had been awhile since she had been inside the church. She watched as the sun broke through the stained glass in smooth golden shards. The window portrayed the child Jesus and his cousin, John the Baptist, spilling the waters of grace from a small pitcher into the peaceful corners of the sanctuary.

As she sat down in the nearby pew, a woman knelt beside her in devotion, fingering pearl rosary beads, while her mouth moved in silent, chanting recitation. The woman had graceful, white hands and Kate immediately thought of her cousin Meg's hands, not in prayer, but gingerly draping a set of lustrous, oriental pearls around her slender neck. Kate had loved the look and feel of Meg's pearls.



Latin word for ship. The curved apse with the raised dais at the high end represented the helm, where the congregation

looked for steady guidance in the midst of tempest and storm. She remembered a beautiful summer's day when Meg's ship arrived in the town harbour, with the Captain standing tall on the bridge

The year following Kate's mother's death, her older cousin had come up to Seattle to take her down the coast by steamer to San Francisco and San Diego for a holiday. Meg was married to a sea captain and they had sailed all over the Pacific, from San Diego to Shanghai and up to Anchorage. Her husband came from a long line of seafaring men dating back to the old days of windjammers and clipper ships.



She looked up toward the altar and remembered that the center of the cathedral was called the nave after the

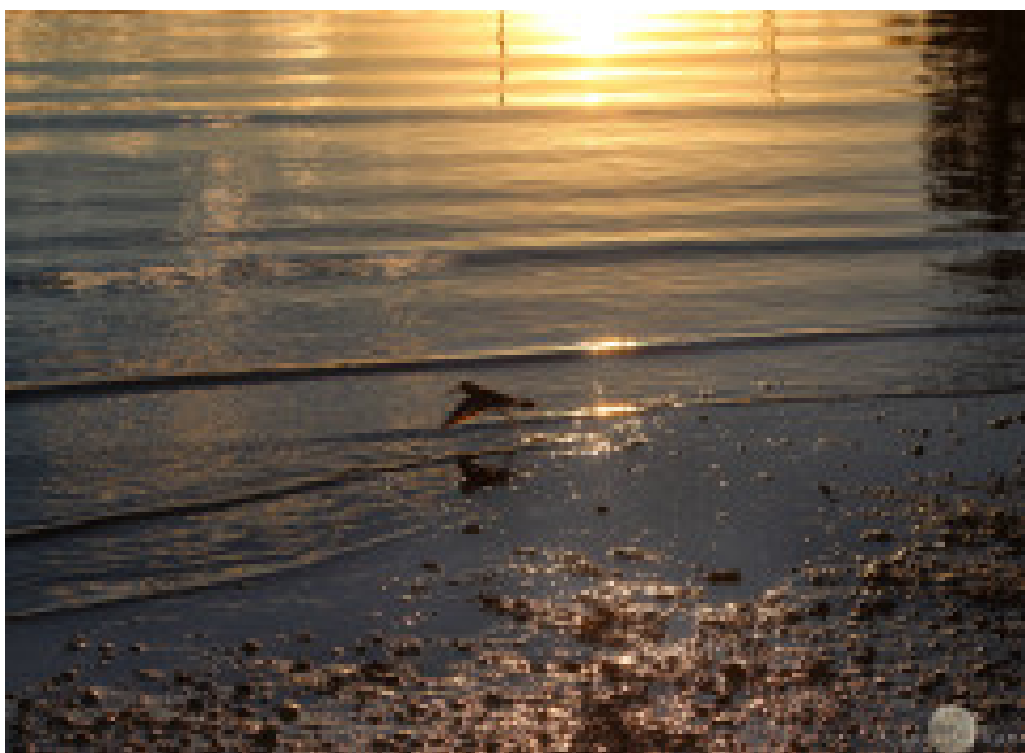
Kate grew up in a neighbourhood of honest, hard-working folk. There had never been time or money for many luxuries. She had arrived in America with her parents when she was about to start school. Other family members had also emigrated from Scotland and Ireland and all had made modest but comfortable lives for themselves. The

lovely Meg stepped out of these humble beginnings and into something far grander. She was tall and slender, with black hair and ivory skin. Her every gesture seemed to breathe a sweet grace and Kate looked up to her as an older sister, with great affection and love.

That early summer on board the coastal steamship was one of the happiest times of her life. She stood laughing at the ship's rail with Meg, as dolphins raced in the wake and clamoring gulls filled the wind. Sometimes her face and hands were wet from the salty, blowing spray of a brief summer squall but she would only go inside when Meg called her for tea. In the early evening she loved to see Meg's Captain walking on the bridge and to hear the music of the ship's bell, as the sky flooded gold at sunset.

Meg and the Captain often touched each affectionately, and whether it was a brief clasping of the fingers, or a gentle brushing away of a wisp of hair Kate sensed a wave of electricity that seemed to pass from one to the other. It illuminated them and everything around them. Kate was affected and her own adolescent heart would race at the thought of the two lovers alone at night in their berth and Meg in the Captain's embrace.

When the holiday finally ended it was hard to return home again, but Kate knew her father needed her, and so it was promised that a strand of pearls would be brought back for her from Singapore. She waited in anticipation, dreaming of exotic harbours where Meg and the Captain strolled hand in hand, and sat sipping tea in tea shops under colourful umbrellas.



The church bell began to toll in deep, resonating waves calling the faithful to Mass. Kate thought of Donne's poem as solemn worshipers entered the sanctuary. For whom is the bell tolling? War had just been declared in Europe. There would be terrible losses to come. She was only nineteen and she thought anxiously of her own young husband and of all the husbands and people who would be caught up in events beyond anyone's control. She placed her hands protectively on her swollen belly. She felt the baby

awaken to the sound of the bell, stirring fearfully inside her as though it sensed the unrelenting summons to suffering. This would be her first child and if it was a girl she would call her Margaret Maire, Meg for short.

The kicking of a tiny foot that usually brought so much joy, had in that moment turned into a blow of piercing sorrow. Meg would never be a mother thought Kate bitterly. In an abrupt and terrible twist of fate Meg never returned from that far off place of monsoons and sudden hurricanes.

On a hot, humid night, in a fevered moment of time, Meg was murdered by her husband in a storm of jealous rage and suspected betrayal. Afterward, in despair he had killed himself. The news arrived on a merciless tide, overwhelming the family in shock and grief. No one would ever fully know what really happened, nor ever fathom the madness of such a horrifying and unforeseen tragedy.

Kate locked away her emotions and struggled to find a comforting grace in a life that had become unpredictably cruel. Everything in her world shifted relentlessly. What hidden shadows could cast such darkness over the hearts of good men? How did a grand love story end in this way?

Was the beautiful Meg in heaven with her Captain, or were they forever condemned? It was much too painful to contemplate. In anguish she withdrew into a stoic view of the uncertainty of life.

The congregation stood reverently, as the priest and servers began to move in somber and hushed procession up the center aisle to the altar. When the church organ began to play, the choir commenced a majestic opening Laudate. The music swelled like a wave on the ocean, engulfing the spaces of the church to the very tops of the tall pillars. As it ascended joyfully into the domed nave, Kate closed her eyes and allowed it to carry her as though she were again standing with Meg near the bow and rising upward on the crest. The billowing sky beckoned them and the baby suddenly leapt, like John the Baptist in the womb of his mother when he sensed the joy of an approaching redemption. The cleansing grace of a summer rain began to fall as a storm gathered on the dark horizon. The altar bell rang out an alert. At the sound, the captain opened his arms heavenward for deliverance, and the passengers knelt in supplication. It was then that a great sob surged upward from the depths of her and, looking down at her wet hands, she realized that they were drenched in tears.

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Friday

Tonight's Theme:

?

with
DJ Gray
and Jami

Night

Howelsen
75, 234, 1545

8-10pm SLT

Live

The Nth

by Zymony Guyot

The Nth by Zy

I am understanding to the Nth
but things are things and facts
The wild perplexities we skate
...are truths, but lies, are life
but plans, are real but tessera
our N-space dreams consume
floods our quark-sparked CPU
...and IF's turn to maybes and
nots
tumbling systems that slide in
Trust that is tentative, tearable
lost in the depths of unhealing

We cannot live, we cannot li

The heartbeats I swim in aren
round numbers, they
desperately cry for irrational t
this precision
and divide by zero
and accept all undefinable...
brings

h
s are facts
e
out acts, are fate
cts.....
e the queue, it
J
d OR's into what-
to so-whats?
e, bendable
g, unendable....
ve this way...
n't looking for
things, they scorn
this consequence

Love never rounds down, hope doesn't divide,
faith never subtracts and dreams don't subside.

To the Nth, I'm your bit...I'll be your one or
zero

And in this I'll commit, no more nothing than
hero

We must all add together, we must all cancel
out

We are waves, we are dots, we are all
...we are not

But this, in our quantum maybe-ness, our
clinging to be possible
or probable, describable or ever so ineffable...

We need to matter, to find what matters...
..to make the gaps in all our spaces whole.

...and this

Even this

Ever this

Only this

to the Nth we pledge our soul.

Merope Madrigal Even Planets Are

Tell me what is in the sky
where the heavens touch the sea.
The stars hang suspended over
the black glitter of the ocean
and shine like drops of water,
globular and patient,
hanging from Arachne's web
flung across the darkness.

Tell me what is in the sky,
in an expanse that is a stranger
to aurora glowing, and tracing
finger painted awe against the stars.
You do not see the bear
lumbering across the night

chased by the dog
for the solstice th
She hunts for sea
and stays far from

Tell me what is in
when the moon l
and gibbous ove
painted with the
the glow of stard
to your audience
the curtains to sh
painted by Orion
flung across his s

Even Planets Are Stars You Know by Merope Madrigal

Stars You Know

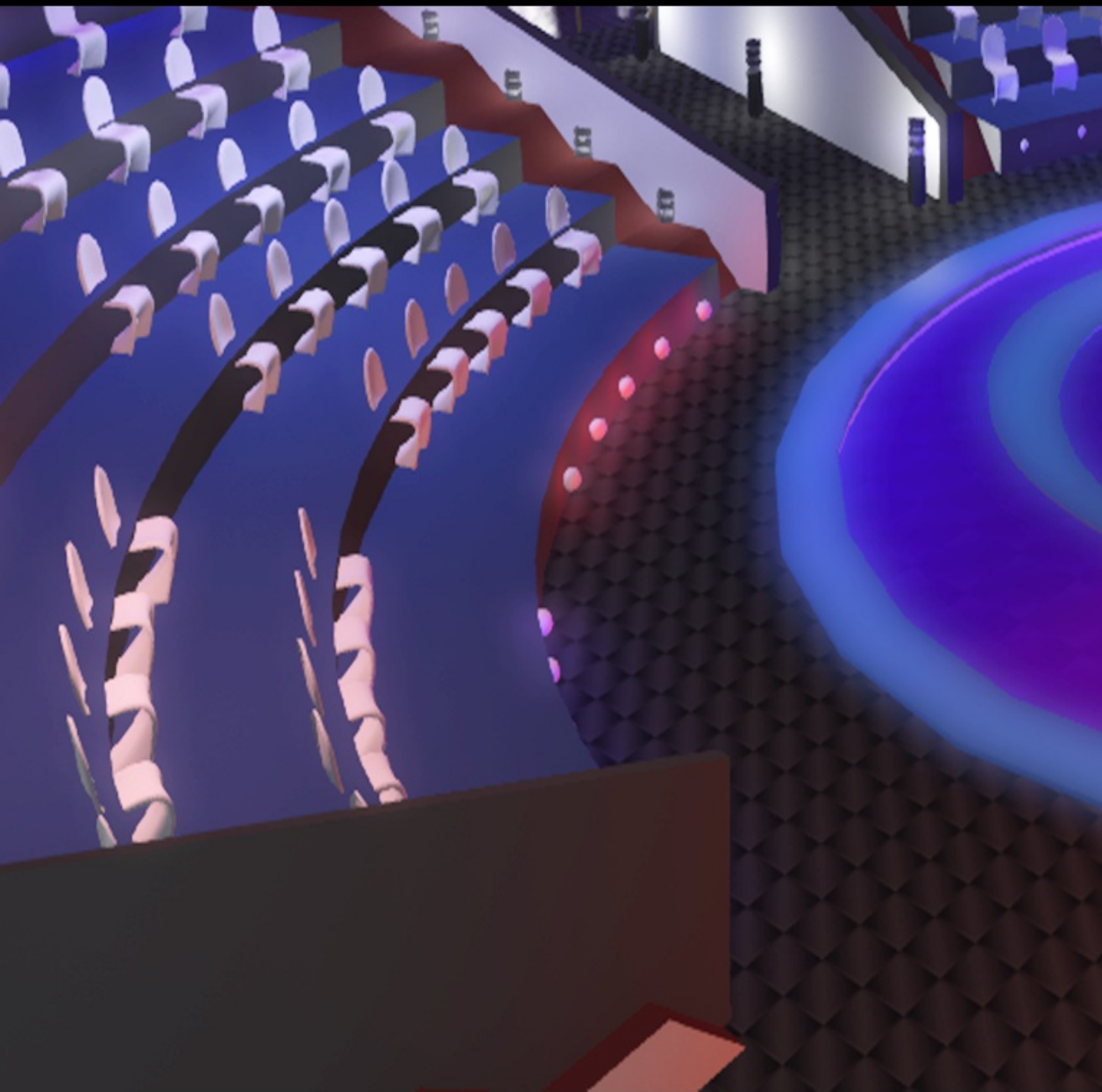
dog, and hungry
that ends the cold.
al and walrus
n the fires of men.

n the sky
hangs low
er an ocean
dusk. You see
ust barely hinted
e, as day draws back
now the masterpiece
n, with his trophy
shoulder

in defiance of all those who
thought the lion had done no harm

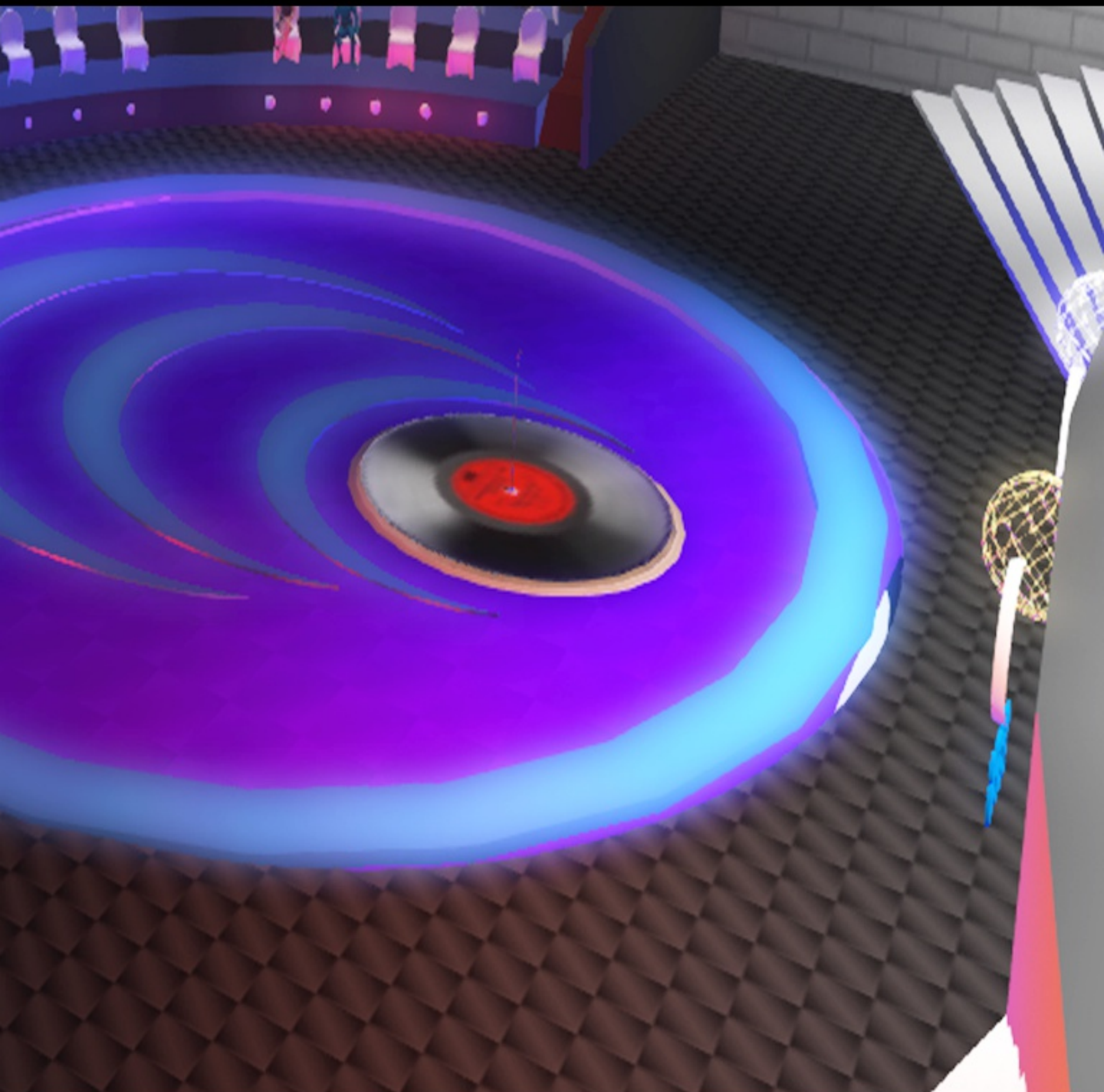
Tell me what is in the sky
as Mars glows pink and Venus blue,
but rarely in the same hour;
while the dog star never leaves.
The clouds blow in to leave
their own star drops in layers
on the ground, and I look up to see
the varied crystals falling in myriad
brilliance to glitter on my lashes,
closed against missing you in the night.

When Reality Imm



The WRONG Bier

immerses



nnale

Art Blue

Isn't it nice when you are a female Avatar and everyone assumes you are a woman and you say, "This is me, look!" You get as a reply, "Wow. You are looking great." Then you say, "This fits me much better than before." But the other person doesn't really get what you mean or that your new mesh body cost a fortune. The person says, "Do you look like this in real?" That's when an awkward moment happens.

friction in order to step forward, to hit the ball, to make a home run. But usually it is better to allow the water to run "like a steady flow of bit coins in a clear river running down from the Crater Lake in Oregon."

You avoid the question by replying, "I create virtual immersive art." When the person shows a clear lack of understanding, mumbling, "Eh?" then you are well prepared and add, "A kind



Such awkward moments you avoid as a professional in this world when asked where you created your artwork that is being presented. You say, "I made it in Mesh and uploaded it to a virtual world." You are smart, that's why you don't say, "I am a Secondlifer." Of course, you can state that you are if you want to create

of art you can explore with an Avatar."

What if the person says, "Is it Second Life?" You have two options, you always have two options when you know me, when you know Substance-D, so you can say, "Yes" and see what happens -- or you can say, "There are many worlds where I show my art and



now you can see it even in Google Cardboard VR.” Now you have moved the person out of the box. At least a little, even if you add later that Second Life is the best virtual world in which to view your art.

If I were in the advertising industry or if I were you I might say, “Recently Juliette from the Surreal Art Gallery, the premier destination, has shown interest in presenting me ... you know the place where Art Blue has his home.” If things ran great, you might get in response, “WOW, really? The gallery Apmel called The Raining Avatar Gallery?”

To make your laughing complete you can kick the ball forward in case the person has never heard of Art Blue and point to THE WRONG Biennale, “Art Blue is a curator for The Wrong Biennale, the biggest digital art show on Earth; THE WRONG runs until March 1, 2020.” You don’t need to say that I am just one among 180 curators or that you are just one of 2,000 artists.

I know it must have made you curious that the art from Second Life goes VR Google Cardboard in a real Biennale, with exhibitions around the globe. The list of embassies is long and can be found on the website of THE WRONG. Many of the embassies make their art presentation in obscure avant garde locations. You cannot

expect every curator to present their embassy in places like The Tate in London or The Spinnerei in Leipzig. But some can. How? By using the WRONG Router, which allows a curator to go into “... MOMA with your device, and host your own digital art show in the same room as Roy Lichtenstein, Jackson Pollock or Salvador Dalí ...”

The WRONG Router is a WLAN hotspot airing your art to tablets and smartphones that are in reach and connected with it via WiFi. Sadly, THE WRONG Router does not bring the work that is hosted in Second Life to the audience. The Router is for webpages and downloads only. A workaround is needed so your art goes Google Cardboard VR which is exactly what THE FAKED VR embassy has developed.

Invitation

How to bring your Mesh- and Prim-Art from Second Life to Google Cardboard VR can be seen at the OpenSimulator Conference Meeting, December 14-15, 2019. Art Blue, Juliette and Herzstein, the developer of the conversion app, will give a talk. You can create your own VR Symphony and get a backstage ticket. Now it's time to admit that I don’t drink beer, but again this would be another story.

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LOVE LOVES US

RoseDrop Rust



"Love loves us" she said,
I saw in sidelong glances
suggestively licked lips.

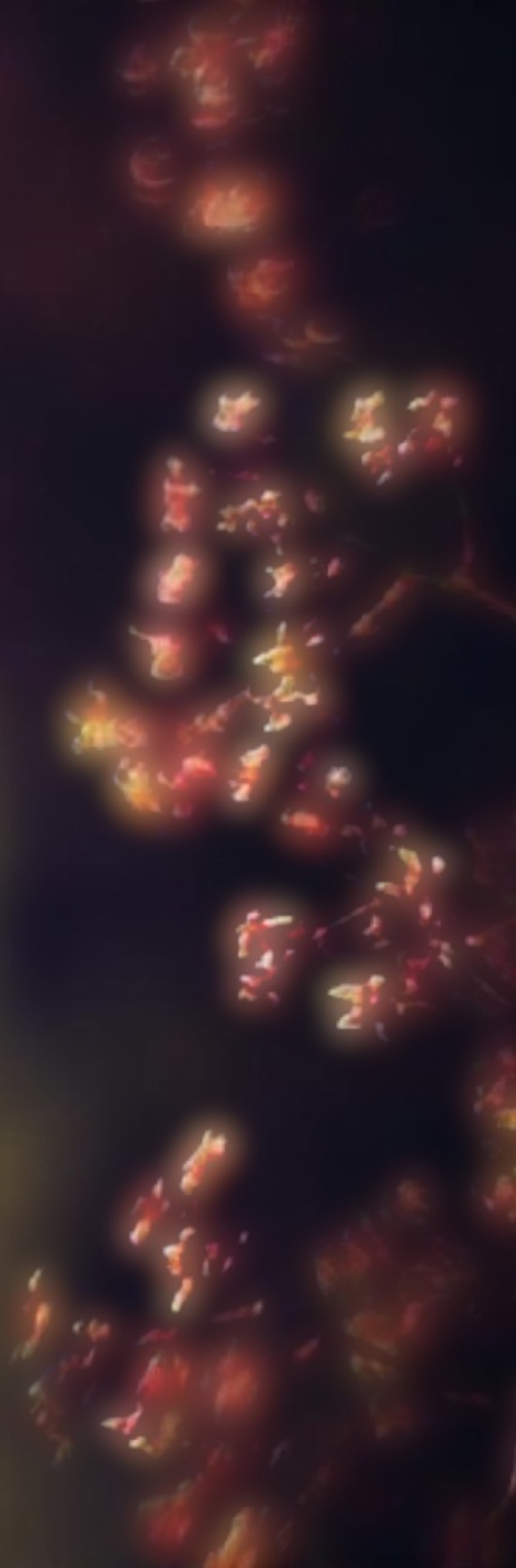
Love watches from corners
unlike dear desire
which is compulsive,
brash, and coarse.

I saw love eating crackers
and staring, appreciating
compromise, adaptation
opportunity's protest signs

Darker are voices
shouting self hate
in logical dialogs
in conference with unlikely.

Still, hope breaks through
flowers we wish won't wilt.

Yes, love loves us
I say, love loves itself
running away even more.



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